

*Bill also expands provision that allows the use of Section 8 so that people can purchase a home*

For Immediate Release

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(Washington, D.C.) - With the high cost of housing in the district, Congressman Albio Sires voted to expand and streamline the Section 8 housing program that provides rental assistance to low-income families, seniors and the disabled. H.R. 1851, the Section 8 Housing Reform Act (SEVRA) of 2007, authorizes additional vouchers, makes numerous procedures more efficient and fully utilizes allotted resources. This reform lifts much of the burden on agencies as well as residents that want to benefit from the federal assistance.

"Section 8 housing has been a stabilizing factor in the lives of millions of American families that cannot afford safe, adequate housing without this assistance," said Congressman Sires. "Additional vouchers as well as practical changes that eliminate red tape strengthen this needed assistance and simplifies the program for those who administer it - the public housing agencies."

The Section 8 Housing Reform Act expands the number of vouchers by 20,000 in each of the next five years, for a total of 100,000 new vouchers. It creates incentives to obtain employment, increase earned income, pursue higher education, and save for retirement.

One of the highlights of H.R. 1851 is that it targets the use of vouchers for homeownership. Housing agencies that opt to participate would be able to allow families to use the housing vouchers to cover a portion of their monthly mortgage expenses.

"Homeownership is part of the American dream. It especially seems out of reach to people who live in high cost areas like my district. This reform bill makes changes in this vital program that will bring stability to participating families and make it easier for them to plan for the future," said Congressman Sires.

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